

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. **(currently amended):** A process for preparing butter milk and/or butter serum, which comprises heat treatment prior to decreasing the dissolved oxygen concentration of at least one selected from the group consisting of milk, a milk product, butter milk and butter serum, followed by heating, and optionally fractionizing the heated product.

2. **(original):** The process according to claim 1, wherein the dissolved oxygen concentration is decreased by addition of inactive gas.

3. **(original):** The process according to claim 2, wherein the inactive gas is nitrogen gas.

4. **(original):** The process according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the dissolved oxygen concentration is 8 ppm or less.

5. **(currently amended):** The process according to any one of claims 1 to 3[[4]], wherein the dissolved oxygen concentration is 5 ppm or less.

6. **(currently amended):** The process according to any one of claims 1 to 3[[5]], wherein the dissolved oxygen concentration is 2 ppm or less.

7. **(currently amended):** A process for preparing a butter milk-related dairy product and/or processed milk product, which comprises subjecting the butter milk and/or butter serum prepared by the process according to any one of claims 1 to 3[[6]] to at least one processing selected from the group consisting of concentration, drying, fractionation, purification, deodorizing, decoloring and addition of an additive.

8. **(currently amended):** A process for preparing a milk product or processed milk product, which comprises adding at least one selected from the group consisting of the butter milk, the butter serum, the milk product and the processed milk product prepared by the process according to any one of claims 1 to 3[[7]] to another milk and/or milk product.

9. **(currently amended):** A process for preparing food or drink, which comprises using, as an addition material, at least one selected from the group consisting of the butter milk, the butter serum, the milk product and the processed milk product prepared by the process according to any one of claims 1 to 3[[8]].

10. **(currently amended):** Butter milk, butter serum, a milk product, a processed milk product, food or drink, prepared by the process according to any one of claims 1 to 3[[9]].